

CASE STUDY **Medtronic**

Medtronic is a world-leader in medical technology with a desire to effect positive change on a global basis. With annual revenues of more than \$28 billion and a mission that seeks “to alleviate pain, restore health, and extend life,” the company is both successful and influential. Most notably, they understand their most powerful company asset: employees.



American companies have become aware of two clashing realities: while company success is largely dependent upon the skill set and intellectual capacity of its employees, most students graduating from urban public high schools lack the necessary skills to succeed within a company like Medtronic.

Many high school students face an uncertain future, particularly those from low-income households. While opportunities are scarce for these students, companies like Medtronic possess incredible potential to simultaneously develop their own workforce and fill the skills gap for low-income high school students. By partnering with Genesys Works, Medtronic has been able to do just that.

IT'S A WIN-WIN PARTNERSHIP

Genesys Works and its corporate partners actively engage to prepare today's students for tomorrow's workforce. By leveraging eight weeks of technical and professional skills training, a year-long paid corporate internship, and extensive college and career coaching, Medtronic and Genesys Works are redefining the high school internship model.

Focused within Medtronic's IT department, students initially tackled the role of help desk and desktop support – that is, until Ray Jarosik, then an IT Director and now Ethics and Compliance Director, proposed the students do even more. “I felt like these students had valuable skills we could use elsewhere within Medtronic, so I started to look for other areas [within the IT department] where we could utilize their talents.”

A key reason the partnership with Genesys Works continued to grow was the unwavering support from Medtronic's Chief Information Officer, Michael Hedges, who saw huge potential in the program. Said Hedges, “Partnering with Genesys Works is a win-win. Students get hands-on corporate experience, help solve real problems and see first-hand what a career in IT is like. The benefits to Medtronic are significant too – students report to their internship with enthusiasm and a hunger to learn. They bring a fresh perspective as digital natives who never knew a world without the World Wide Web.”

The Medtronic and Genesys Works vision eventually led to an opportunity for high school intern, Kachia, who did not disappoint. In 2011, Medtronic knew it could economize by identifying unused IT equipment. By scouring equipment inventory spreadsheets, making comparisons, and checking on usage, Kachia afforded Medtronic with substantial savings on its maintenance contract, totaling \$342,370. Her enthusiasm and dedication was Medtronic's gain.

IMPACTING EMPLOYEES, NOT JUST STUDENTS

Internships, particularly those occupied by high school seniors, inevitably prompt the development of leadership skills and company engagement in their supervisors. As Medtronic repeatedly invests in high school students, more full-time employees become responsible for their growth. In 2015, Scott Farwig was entrusted as intern Aaron's supervisor. Throughout the

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year, Scott challenged Aaron with increasingly difficult tasks and post-internship, he continued to encourage him throughout his college application process. Upon reflection, Scott noted that he “really enjoyed witnessing such significant changes occur within a short span of time.”

The Genesys Works program also revealed the leadership potential of another supervisor within Medtronic’s IT Support Center, Sheila Tierney. Supporting three interns, she set high expectations and challenged each of them to receive phone call requests in addition to email requests. Stated Sheila’s supervisor Jamie Zephyr, “Sheila helps them set realistic work goals and gives them the freedom they need to exercise their decision-making abilities.” Since 2009, more than 60 full-time Medtronic employees have fulfilled the role of intern supervisor, developing their own managerial skills while helping transform the lives of others.

BEYOND THE INTERNSHIP

Since the partnership’s onset, Medtronic has added a variety of IT positions available to high school students. Once limited to the help desk and desktop support, students can now assume roles in device deployment, data/quality assurance, development support and project coordinator/operations support. Says Jarosik, “The value was on both sides. For the past four years, we’ve utilized more than 20 students each year, and the only way we have been able to do so was by extending into other areas of IT. Stellar intern performance then enabled this growth to become a reality.”

Because of this role expansion, Jarosik saw this as an opportunity to more fully develop this pipeline of talent. He cited Class of 2010 intern, Bao, who eventually returned to work at Medtronic after Genesys Works. “Bao really thrived. We would consistently be able to throw new things at her to the point where we even had her supervising other Genesys Works interns.”

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, 65 percent of students who take part in paid internships are offered full-time jobs—almost double the number of those with no internship experience. May Yang’s 2011 internship in data management ultimately led to a Bachelor’s degree from Concordia University and subsequently, a full-time job at a commercial real estate company. She credits her success to the positive support system established through her Medtronic internship.

Since 2009, Medtronic has engaged 150 low-income high school students in year-long internships, forever changing the trajectory of their lives while providing meaning to the work of the Medtronic employees making this possible. In partnership with Genesys Works, Medtronic is simultaneously investing in its future and in America’s future economic success.

**GENESYS
WORKS.** For **Students**
For **Companies**
For **Communities****Medtronic**

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MICHAEL HEDGES

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER, MEDTRONIC